

WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Tim Ryan (OH-17) joined members of the Ohio delegation to call for the interagency transfer of a retired National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Space Shuttle orbiter, which would be preserved and displayed at the National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) in Ohio.

"It would be an honor and privilege for Ohio to host a retired space shuttle," said Congressman Tim Ryan.

"The Museum maximizes the visibility of the Air Force for Ohio residents and all Americans. The shuttle's presence at this world-class facility will encourage continued interest in science, mathematics, and technology – all while telling the proud story of the United States Air Force."

The NMUSAF is located on historic Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. The Museum hosts 1.3 million visitors annually.

The full text of the letter is below the fold.

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February 7, 2011

Major General Charles F. Bolden, USMC (Ret.)
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20546-0002

Dear General Bolden:

We are writing to express our continued support for the Secretary of the Air Force's request for an interagency transfer of a retired National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Space Shuttle orbiter for preservation and display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) in Ohio. We wish to reiterate our support for this transfer by emphasizing the mutual advantages for NASA, the Air Force, and the American people.

Public visibility and accessibility are key benefits to placing the orbiter at the Air Force's national museum. The NMUSAF, located on historic Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, is a cross roads of Middle America. Within a day's drive of 60 percent of the U.S. population, the Museum hosts 1.3 million visitors annually. The NMUSAF, which is the world's oldest and largest aviation museum, provides a premier venue to showcase the shuttle. Its ample free parking and free admission make it easily accessible to all.

Of particular note, the Museum has adopted a mission to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and has committed to an intensive STEM education program, not only in connection with the space shuttle, but with all its educational programming. The Ohio Department of Education, a national leader in STEM education, intends to use a shuttle at the Museum for maximum educational benefits throughout the state, especially in lessons directly aligned with STEM.

Moreover, the NMUSAF will use the shuttle not only for educational purposes, but in fulfilling its central mission to preserve and present the Air Force story, and to archive aerospace defense technology. The Museum has the world's best aviation preservationists. No other museum in the world matches the knowledge and resources needed to preserve an orbiter. Thus, by keeping the shuttle in the Air Force and the federal government, it will continue to provide taxpayer benefits. And, as a national treasure, it belongs in the hands of the people.

Strengthening important aerospace heritage relationships is another key benefit of placing an orbiter at the NMUSAF, near the historic home and workplace of the Wright Brothers. Ohio, the birthplace of aviation, is proud of its century-long tradition of aviation pioneering and human spaceflight development. The Air Force has been a full partner with NASA in human spaceflight from its origins in the Mercury program to today. The Air Force has contributed more than \$8 billion in research and development, operations and maintenance, procurement, and construction funding in support of the Shuttle program. Because of the role of the Department of Defense in developing our nation's human spaceflight program including the Space Shuttle Program including sponsoring numerous shuttle missions, it is important to use the shuttle to tell the story to the American people of its important contributions to our national security—and there is no better place to tell that story than in the Defense Department's largest and most popular museum.

With these facts and our support in mind, we hope that you will carefully consider the many advantages of placing an orbiter under Air Force stewardship at the NMUSAF. We all look forward to Ohio becoming a home for this national treasure and being able to aid in sharing an important chapter in space history for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Sherrod Brown
Robert Portman
Michael R. Turner
Steve Austria
Steve Chabot
Bob Gibbs
Marcia Fudge
Bill Johnson
Jim Jordan
Marcy Kaptur
Steve LaTourette
Robert Latta

James Renacci
Tim Ryan
Jean Schmidt
Steve Stivers
Betty Sutton
Patrick Tiberi